

"What Big Sisters Are For"

By Dr. T

Rain ripped through the trees. To her, the whole world seemed to be covered by a wet blanket. Wind groaned through the bending trees. Her teeth chattered like drums blaring from a radio. Flashes of light filled her room, on and off as if a photographer was there from the local newspaper. This was a night that Samantha needed some comforting words. Only Samantha and her big sister were home. Would her big sister save her from her fearful heart? Samantha wished her mom and dad would get home safe and soon.

Just as the rain began to calm, a pounding on her bedroom door began. Samantha heard the strained scream of her big sister "There's a burglar in the house! Open this door, let me in!"

Samantha ran to the door. Her trembling hands shook as she fumbled with the lock she had turned to protect her from such intruders. The pounding and shouting continued as Samantha begged the door to open. In a rush, the lock came free, the door swung wide and there in the hall stood her big sister. Her panic turned to laughter. "What a wimp you are." The words shot from her mouth as if they were aimed directly at Samantha's heart.

Samantha's breath came back for a moment. She went from fear to relief to anger in a New York second.

"Why did you scare me like that?" demanded Samantha.

"Why? Because that's what big sisters are for," Big Sis said as she turned and walked away in to the house darkened by the storm knocking out the power.

Samantha fell back on her bed. Even her favorite cuddly soft fabric doll was no comfort. Her fear was only part of what she felt. Why did Big Sister feel the need to scare her? Samantha's trust was betrayed.

As she lay on her bed, she heard a shout that had pain as its main characteristic. Samantha jumped from the bed to run to the sound. As she ran through the hall, BAM! She caught her bare baby toe on the door. Pain shot through her foot, up her leg, and fell again to her little toe. The pain hit her toe like a piggy bank filled with coins causing her to limp and say things in a language no one could understand . . . and probably shouldn't be repeated.

"Samantha, help, I tripped over a blanket on the floor in the dark. I fell and cracked my head on the table!"

Favoring her sore toe, Samantha hobbled along and finally reached the living room. There, in the dark, Samantha could barely make out her big sister on the couch. When big sister sensed Samantha's presence, her screams changed to laughter.

Samantha stood rubbing her foot in an attempt to calm the throbbing pain. Again, Samantha felt the pain of deception. Again, the disappointment of the moment struck her as she realized her big sister wasn't an example to be admired. She was not trustworthy. Samantha returned to her room. Behind her she heard laughter and the words "That's what big sisters are for!" Samantha didn't believe that.

The storm continued. The pace of the lightening quickened. The thunder increased its bravado and came closer and closer behind the flashes of light. In an instant, it seemed a flash filled the room; the sound was monstrous. This lightening wasn't a distant relative. It was like a family member taking a place at the dinner table.

Things calmed for a moment. "Samantha, come on. Let's get out of here! There's a fire from that bolt of lightening that just hit the house!"

"Yeah, right" Samantha said.

"No I mean it! It's true!" Sis said with a serious tone.

"Why don't you tell our burglar to put out the fire? No wait, throw that blanket you tripped on over it. That would smother it." Samantha insisted. Samantha refused to open the door.

The door was pounding like a racing heartbeat as Big Sis struck it repeatedly with clenched fists. "Please Samantha, I'm not joking, there's a fire! We have to get out!" Samantha made her way to the bed. As she did she saw the headlights of a car fill the front lawn with two beams of light. Her mom and dad were home at last! They will get an earful about her older sister. She can't be believed or trusted.

In a moment there was a commotion. Cries from her mother and father could be heard. Suddenly, her father's voice rang out "Samantha, open this door!"

Samantha ran and unlocked her door. Smoke greeted her as it rolled down the hallway. She felt the grasp of a hand on her wrist. In no time she was being escorted through the smoke and was soon out the door. She saw her big sis and mom standing on the lawn. They embraced as dad ran through the light rain to their neighbor's house. "I'm calling 9-1-1. Stay out of the house."

Soon the firefighter's came. Though there was damage to the house, the most important parts, the family members, were safe.

That night they sat at a diner planning how to deal with this tragedy. Samantha considered whether to share with mom and dad what big sis had done. "I'm thankful we are all safe," said dad. "Samantha, why was your door locked? Your sister was trying to warn you, why wouldn't you listen to your sister?"

Just as Samantha was about to answer, Big Sister spoke. She told the whole story as mom and dad sat and listened.

“If we hadn’t come home when we did, you two may have been trapped in that burning house,” said mom. “You lied twice, and Samantha believed you, but when you finally were telling the truth, you weren’t believed. Even when a liar tells the truth, they are often not believed. You’re lucky this time. Next time, not being trustworthy could do serious damage. Be an inspiration, a good example, reliable and trustworthy. Now that’s what big sisters are for.”